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Cromwell in the Garden: A Study in Balance

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CROMWELL IN THE GARDEN:
A STUDY IN BALANCE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship between Andrew Marvell's poem "The Garden" and his three major poems about Oliver Cromwell, "An Horation Ode upon Comwel's Return from Ireland," "The First Anniversary of the Government under O.C.," and "A Poem upon the Death of O.C." It is shown that "The Garden" is a statement of social theory and the Cromwell poems are illustrations of that theory put into practice in a real man's life, as Marvell perceived it.

A close reading of "The Garden" reveals Marvell's theory that a balance of opposites leads to success while extremism leads to madness. Marvell leads his speaker from the extreme of ambition to the extreme of isolation and, finally, into a life of both contentment and productivity, illustrative of balance.

The three Cromwell poems are considered in terms of themes and symbols recurrent in the poems and shared with "The Garden." Taken chronologically, the Cromwell poems show the evolution of Marvell's opinion of Cromwell from that of an admirable leader with questionable rights to that of a brilliant governor undeniably meant to rule. Marvell shows that Cromwell's fitness and his success result from his ability to balance his roles as soldier, ruler, and subject, a conclusion strongly echoing that of "The Garden."

CROMWELL IN THE GARDEN:

A STUDY IN BALANCE

In 1650, Andrew Marvell, like most of his countrymen, was thinking about government--where lay its foundation, who deserved to guide it, what it meant to the individual as well as to nations. The Civil War had ended with the king beheaded and a commoner named Cromwell ruling the country. To traditionalists, Cromwell was evil, having raised himself to power through war and regicide and restructured the government to match his own vision. And, yet, even Cromwell's enemies had to admit that he was a most capable man, in the halls of Parliament as well as on the battlefield. As the Earl of Clarendon wrote, Cromwell was "a brave, bad man,"[1] as much to be admired as reviled. What did this do to one's concept of royalty and right, of social structure? Should the power to rule be granted to him who comes to it by birth or by demonstrated ability? And how should he who has power exercise it--as the maker of laws, as the enforcer of laws, as the subject of laws? Marvell addressed these issues in his poetry. In "The Garden," he worked out a theory of society and of man's role in it. In three major poems about Cromwell, he examined a real-life example of his theory. Reading the Cromwell poems in the light cast by "The Garden" lends depth to both the theory and its application as Marvell perceived it in Cromwell's career.

In 1650, Marvell wrote "An Horatian Ode upon Cromwel's Return from Ireland," in which he acknowledges Cromwell's soldierly successes in a tone reserved and noncommital, at the same time acknowledging the "antient Rights" of royal succession and Charles I's dignity in defeat.[2]

In 1654, Marvell wrote "The First Anniversary of the Government under O.C.," and now he portrays Cromwell as the very linchpin in the natural order of the universe, with sovereign power so obviously necessary that the prospect of his death terrifies one and all. Four years later, Marvell wrote "A Poem upon the Death of O.C.," and here Cromwell appears as the wise, accomplished statesman and tender-hearted father. The final view of Cromwell after reading all three poems is one of balanced opposites: violence, tenderness; power, humility; activity, passivity; idealism, realism. But, this view evolved in Marvell's mind, and the stages of this evolution are something we should examine, especially in the light of "The Garden."

Written during Marvell's sojourn at Nun Appleton House from 1650 to 1652, "The Garden" appears between the composition of the first and second Cromwell poems and reflects Marvell's ideals of society, government, and man's role in each. A complex, subtle, difficult, and sometimes delightful poem, it has been the subject of much conflicting criticism. Marvell's images from varied sources and his telescoping puns require careful interpretation, which we shall attend to presently, but the point of it all is the theme of balance, the balance of opposites to achieve stability and usefulness. "The Garden" is Marvell's statement of an ideal, which he slowly comes to realize is translated into practical terms in the person and career of Oliver Cromwell.

The first step toward that realization was Marvell's recognition of balanced opposites in Cromwell's early career, reflected in the

"Horation Ode." In the first lines, we read that the young Cromwell held the Muses dear and seemed to like singing "in the Shadows" (1. 3), but was "restless" (1. 10). The image is that of an artistic, bookish youth who yet was drawn to adventure. Indeed, he is even ambitious, for he trades "the inglorious Arts of Peace" (1. 10) for war, which one must take to be glorious by contrast, and to confer glory upon its participants. And, apparently, Cromwell's participation cannot come soon enough, for though he has an "active Star" (1. 12) which already destines him for war, he still urges it on. So we have a retiring, artistic youth anxious for adventure and glory.

Once into the fray, Cromwell is shown not as encompassing his own opposites, but in opposition to Charles. The "antient Rights" of monarchy "do hold or break / As Men are strong or weak" (11. 39,40), and, of course, Cromwell is the strong and Charles the weak. Charles is Caesar resting on his laurels, which gets his head blasted off (11. 23,24). Cromwell will be Caesar on his campaign of conquest, which gets him power (11. 101,102). Charles is "the Royal Actor born" (1. 53), while Cromwell is "the forced Pow'r" (1. 66); that is, Charles came to rule by birth, Cromwell by force. More importantly, Charles is an actor, a mere play-figure, while Cromwell is a power. And, though an actor, Charles is passive, going to his execution with quiet dignity, while Cromwell is the force which acts upon the actor. In fact, according to the popularly-accepted story to which Marvell refers (11. 47-52), Cromwell acted upon Charles by fooling him into the ambush which resulted in his capture. This act showed Cromwell's "wiser Art" (1.

48), as opposed to Charles' more foolish art of acting. When all is said and done in the "Horatian Ode," the oppositions between the two men point up Cromwell's superiority. Yet, who should have ruled is left an ambiguous issue, for right lay with Charles, but rights are broken when men are weak.

Cromwell as ruler, however, is pronounced fit by virtue of humility:

> Nor yet grown stiffer with Command,
> But still in the Republik's hand:
> How fit he is to sway
> That can so well obey
>
> (11. 81-84)

His violence in seizing command is balanced by humility once he gains command: he is the ruler ruled. He even forswears admiration for his military success in Ireland, preferring to attribute greatness to his country than to himself. The image of the falcon which kills only on the command of its falconer (11. 91-96) underscores Cromwell's capacity for but lack of wantonness in violence and his submission to the rule of his country. Again, opposites balance: command, humility; violence, submission.

Marvell does not, however, end the poem on this relatively positive note. Rather, he describes Cromwell as a conquering Caesar and issues a warning. That Cromwell can succeed in war there is no doubt, and Marvell is correct in his prediction of the Scots' defeat, and he foresees a continuing need for battle if Cromwell is to retain the power he has won: "The same Arts that did gain / A Pow'r must it maintain"

(11. 119,120). Whatever qualities Cromwell has of restraint or humility, he must rely on action and violence to secure his gains. He does not, after all, have law or birthright on his side. The poem ends grimly, itself balanced between admiration and disapproval.

And so the questions are raised but not yet answered. Should the man with the most ability rule even though he has no legal birthright to the throne? If the answer is yes, is he right to use any means necessary to secure his power? Marvell carried these questions into retirement with him when he moved to Nun Appleton late in 1650.[3] There, removed from London society, perhaps the problems became more philosophical. Sometime during the next two years at Nun Appleton, Marvell addressed the issues of government and social structure and of man's proper activity within them in "The Garden." Speaking in symbols, Marvell simplified the problem to one of man versus Nature, thereby reducing the number of elements to juggle and impersonalizing the argument. Just what was it that man required to live productively, yet sanely, at peace but without stagnation? The answer, worked out step by step in "The Garden," is balance. It will be worth our time now to give the poem close attention in order to understand both this poem and its implications for the Cromwell poems.

A quick reading of "The Garden" reveals that Marvell has created a speaker who narrates his own attempt to find a better way of life than that of competing for public recognition. The speaker at first exchanges one extreme for another retreating from human society into the world of plants. He finds, however, that his exuberance has led him into folly.

His body, mind, and soul, set free from one another in a frightful ecstasy, cannot properly perform their normal functions. The ecstasy ends, as all ecstasies do, reuniting the speaker's being but leaving him with a bitterness toward the garden as distorted as his original enthusiasm for it. Finally, in the very last stanza, the speaker discovers the proper arena for human activity, a garden of carefully cultivated plants, which represents a balance between the self-serving, competitive world of men and the self-annihilating wilderness of Nature. Only in this garden, where human skill and nature, man and plants are united, does the speaker find contentment. An examination of the poem's language, as well as its images, reveals this theme of balance.

I

How vainly men themselves amaze
To win the Palm, the Oke, or Bayes;
And their uncessant Labours see
Crown'd from some single Herb or Tree.
Whose short and Narrow verged Shade
Does prudently their Toyles upbraid:
While all Flow'rs and all Trees do close
To weave the Garlands of repose.

This opening stanza states the theme: men strive for recognition in single fields represented by single plants, whereas all plants, or rewards, may be won entirely without strife. Marvell's choice of words makes this plain. Men "amaze" or confuse themselves into performing "uncessant Labours" in order to reach a goal. But the effort is "vain," useless, because mesmerized men suffer a distorted sense of reality. They think only to win "some single Herb or Tree" and never even notice that the single plants themselves chide, "upbraid," the men's efforts. The men see only that the plants are literally braided up into garlands

of honor, and the only "prudence" the men recognize is the carefulness with which the plants are woven. Therefore, they are also "vain" in the sense of being blindly proud, showing less wisdom than the plants which "prudently" or wisely pass judgment on them. The plants know, and the amazed men do not realize, that the whole of the plant kingdom and all the "garlands" of praise are available to those who do not strive. Indeed, the reward of repose is wholeness, or balance, represented by garlands made from "all Flow'rs and all Trees" woven together.

II

Fair quiet, have I found thee here,
And Innocence thy Sister dear!
Mistaken long, I sought you then
In busie Companies of Men.
Your sacred Plants, if here below,
Only among the Plants will grow.
Society is all but rude,
To this delicious Solitude.

Gloating over his own wisdom in seeking out Quiet and Innocence among plants instead of among men, the speaker first personifies Quiet and Innocence, but then refers to them as plants as well. He thereby at once raises the status of plants to that of people and reduces the status of people to that of vegetation. This is an important step in the speaker's developing concept of the garden. It leads naturally to the total rejection of human affection in the next stanza, to the misinterpretation of myth in the fourth stanza, and to the animation of plants in the fifth stanza.

Plant life is gradually becoming more and more human to the speaker. This is not quite a rational perception of life, and we are not to read it as quite rational. Accordingly, the speaker concludes

that "Society is all but rude, / To this delicious Solitude," and by that conclusion commits the error of which Marvell is warning us, the error of discarding many parts of one's self in favor of cultivating only one part. In the first stanza, as we have seen, ambitious men committed this error, and now, trying to correct that mistake in himself, the speaker commits the same error in the opposite direction. He changes his environment from society to Nature, but he still remains in "Solitude," a state of singleness and, in the context of the poem, a state of imbalance.

III

No white nor red was ever seen
So am'rous as this lovely green.
Fond Lovers, cruel as their Flame,
Cut in these Trees their Mistress name.
Little, Alas, they know, or heed,
How far these Beauties Hers exceed!
Fair Trees! where s'eer your barkes I wound,
No Name shall but your own be found.

Here the speaker establishes plants as superior to women as objects of man's affection. Plants are, in his opinion, more "am'rous" than women--that is, both more loving and more easily loved. One should note this early, though casual, reference to plants actively loving, for it will return in stanza five. Maren-Sofie Røstvig interprets the "am'rous" green, as well as the sensuous, animate fruit of the fifth stanza, as expressions of Hermetic mythology. Røstvig advances this reading on the basis of a passage from one book of the Hermetica, in which Man and Nature fell in love with one another and Nature clasped Man in a passionate embrace.[4] There are, however, better explanations available. It is more likely that "am'rous" carries the meaning of

"loveable," since Marvell's speaker is arguing the superiority of trees over women as objects of love. H. M. Margoliouth offers several supporting instances of this usage in his notes to "The Garden" in The Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell.[5]

The very notion sounds silly to us, as it should and as Marvell surely meant it to sound. But the speaker is quite serious in his assertion, and calls lovers of women "Fond," or foolish, because they do not perceive, as he does, that plants' beauty exceeds women's. In fact, he calls the lovers' women "Flame," and fire is anathema to green, growing things. Cruelty, claims the speaker, is the result of the lovers' ignorance. At first glance, their cruelty appears to lie in the act of cutting the trees. On closer examination, however, one realizes that the tradition of carving a loved one's name into a tree's bark is quite all right with the speaker, although we know that cutting the bark injures the tree. But the speaker would carve the tree's own names upon them, for the oaks and elms and such are his mistresses, and it would be an insult to honor a human mistress by using a far more loveable tree as a message board. Therein lies the "Fond Lovers'" cruelty! Again, the speaker is not quite rational, for he allows injury to the beloved trees even while condemning dishonor of them.

IV

When we have run our Passions heat,
Love hither makes his best retreat.
The Gods, that mortal Beauty chase,
Still in a tree did end their race.
Apollo hunted Daphne so,
Only that She might Laurel grow.
And Pan did after Syrinx speed,
Not as a Nymph, but for a Reed.

If we harbor any lingering doubt as to the speaker's skewed vision, the fourth stanza should remove it. Here he twists time-honored meanings of ancient myths to suit his own purposes. The stanza begins with a transition from the preceding stanza. Passion, or the love between man and woman, does not exist in the garden, and, so, "When we have run our Passions heat," have finished with passion as has the speaker, the best place to escape or "retreat" from it is in the garden. The speaker even offers classical support for his opinions, and here we find him out.

In myth, Apollo and Pan fall in love with nymphs and pursue them in lust and in desire of possession. The nymphs change into plants in order to escape their pursuers. Apollo and Pan make the best of things by using their plant-women for art. In honor of the beloved, the laurel which was Daphne becomes the symbol of poetry, of which Apollo was god. And Syrinx's reed becomes the source and symbol of Pan's music. Now, one would expect the speaker of the poem to point to Daphne and Syrinx, the pursued females, as examples of his theory that plant life is preferable to passion, since they chose to become plants rather than be caught by lustful gods. But no. Instead, he completely twists the entire story and claims that Apollo and Pan were never interested in the nymphs as females, but actually intended that they should turn into plants, because plants were what each god wanted in the first place.

This is patently foolish. It is the desperate sophistry of a man clinging to dreams. And let us remember this man is not Marvell, but the speaker he created. Twisting classical mythology to suit one's own

ends, however, is a trick Marvell as writer borrows from his speaker from the libertine poets of France, as Frank Kermode points out.[6] Marvell would have been familiar with libertine poetry and ideas, because Lord Fairfax and his brother-in-law, Mildmay Fane, were reading, adapting, and translating the poems of St. Amant during Marvell's time at Nun Appleton, as we learn from Ruth Wallerstein. Wallerstein reads in "The Garden" "a not improbable answer" to the libertines.[7] Kermode argues that such an answer was Marvell's entire purpose for "The Garden" and labels the poem "anti-genre."[8]

In some ways, Marvell does answer libertine ideas. The libertines corrupt mythology in order to justify sexual license, while Marvell has his speaker justifying total rejection of woman's love in favor of vegetable love. Also, Marvell shows through his speaker's silliness that a retreat from society into nature is self-indulgent and non-productive, whereas the libertines romanticized just such retreat and indulgence as evidences of sensibility and the means to personal fulfillment.

V

What wond'rous Life is this I lead!
Ripe Apples drop about my head;
The Luscious Clusters of the Vine
Upon my Mouth do crush their Wine;
The Nectaren, and curious Peach,
Into my hands themselves do reach;
Stumbling on Melons, as I pass,
Insnar'd with Flow'rs, fall on Grass.

The speaker starts out thinking his life in the garden is "wond'rous," but he does not at first recognize how sinister it is. That fruit should put themselves forward to be eaten seems lovely and

generous. The idea appears as early as Pliny's writing, in which a description of creation includes this passage: "Pomona gave useful qualities to plants and said, 'They proffer themselves unasked, and if it be too much trouble to reach them they actually fall of themselves.'"[9] This strikes home much more solidly than the Hermetic, loving Nature which Røstvig invokes in this stanza.

The stanza draws on the sponte sua tradition of country house poems. Starting with The Odyssey and continuing with poems by Ben Johnson, Robert Herrick, and Thomas Carew, the poems in praise of country manors' largesse describe animals and fish offering themselves up to be eaten, while fruits and vegetables produce without stint on purpose to provide for the household.[10] A look at Marvell's verbs in stanza five, however, reveal his fruits and flowers as dark relations to these earlier ones. Marvell's are insistent and dangerous in their self-sacrifice. Apples "drop" around the speaker's head, bombarding him; grapes "crush" themselves upon his mouth, surely making speech impossible, effectively gagging him; nectarines and peaches "reach" into his hands, rendering them as useless as if bound. This is no mere offering up of fruit; it is a forceful assault upon the speaker's body. Some may argue that it is the speaker's own fault that he stumbles on the melons in his way, but the poem states plainly that he is "Insnar'd with Flow'rs," and being ensnared is a passive condition. The action of ensnaring belongs to the flowers.

The speaker's passivity, combined with the stanza's rich fruit imagery, gives Stanley Stewart grounds for claiming a direct connection

to Song of Songs. The speaker, he says, is identical with the Bride of Christ because, in the Song of Songs, the Bride sits in the shade of an apple tree which drops its fruit into her lap.[11] But this cannot be. The speaker in stanza five is not voluntarily passive, but unwillingly helpless. Fruit is forced upon him until he is ensnared, not saved as is the Bride married to Christ. The only real connection between the Song of Songs and "The Garden" is a richness of imagery which they share, but which does not descend as a precedent from one to the other.

The result of the plants' activity is a fall. Are we to read this as a Biblical Fall? The question arises from the eight-stanza reference to Eden. There are, however, vital differences between Adam's experience in Eden and the speaker's experience in the garden. In the poem, the speaker has no Eve to mislead him and commits no sin. Rather, this is the speaker's attempt and failure to re-enter Eden, for man was forbidden a life in the garden when Adam fell. The speaker evidently does not recognize his membership in an entire race already fallen and barred from earthly Paradise as the result of Adam's sin. He does not experience an Adamic Fall from grace; he was not in a state of grace to begin with. He is simply rendered immobile, his body made useless to him. He is finding that life in Nature, without the structure of society, results in one's becoming rather vegetable oneself, inactive and unproductive.

VI

Mean while the Mind, from pleasure less,
Withdraws into its happiness:
The Mind, that Ocean where each kind
Does streight its own resemblance find;

Yet it creates, transcending these,
Far other Worlds, and other Seas;
Annihilating all that's made
To a green Thought in a green shade.

One can argue that when one's body is inactive, one's mind is freed to fully exercise its creative faculties. This is the reasoning in support of the retired life, and the separation of the body from its mind and soul is the traditional result of ecstatic experience. Perhaps this stanza can be read as an ecstasy, perhaps even as an ecstasy symbolic of retired life. But is it a state to be desired?

The "I" disappears in the sixth and seventh stanzas, since the speaker's body is temporarily paralyzed. The voice in these stanzas changes to that of the mind and soul, individually reporting their experiences, since the body cannot speak for them. The speaker's body has been trapped into inactivity, so his mind escapes from the "pleasure less" of the senses to the greater "happiness" of a creative mentality. That is, the mind retreats into itself. And why not? Therein lie all things which exist in the material world, as indicated by Marvell's use of the old, yet elegant, notion from Pliny that the ocean contains an exact counterpart of every creature living on land. Pliny's notion of parallel land and sea worlds was still so often accepted as fact in the early seventeenth century that Sir Thomas Browne, writing in 1629, devoted an entire chapter on his Pseudodoxia Epidemica to debunking the myth.[12] Marvell had only to reach into current popular thought to find this neo-Platonic metaphor. In this case, the mind is "that Ocean," containing an exact mental image or concept of every material thing.

But the mind has an advantage over Pliny's ocean: it can create in itself other worlds entirely, mental worlds, transcendent worlds, worlds which are themselves concepts. The mind then creates seas to parallel these new worlds, and the seas are also concepts. What lives within these conceptual seas, then--the counterparts of what lives in the conceptual worlds--are concepts. The mind contains concepts contained in yet other concepts. Is it so hard to understand, then, that in its creative action the mind is "Annihilating all that's made," all that's material, earthly, in favor of all that's thought? The mind has destroyed the real world and replaced it with conceptual worlds--with "a green Thought in a green Shade," a thought within a shadow of a thought, a concept of a concept. The speaker has completely lost touch with reality. Marvell has made his point: retirement and aloneness, while being tremendously productive mentally, have no effect upon the real world.

VII

Here at the Fountains sliding foot,
Or at some Fruit-trees mossy root,
Casting the Bodies Vest aside,
My Soul into the boughs does glide:
There like a Bird it sits, and sings,
Then whets, and combs its silver Wings;
And, till prepar'd for longer flight,
Waves in its Plumes the various light.

The body is lying useless in the grass, the mind is flying in its own atmosphere, and, so, the soul now finds itself released from all physical and mental restraints, almost as though the speaker had died. Here in this garden of fountains and fruit trees, the soul is free to

cast "the Bodies Vest aside" and enter its own natural environment, which is purely spiritual.

That the soul has entered a purely spiritual realm is indicated by the fountain and fruit tree in whose presence the soul finds its freedom. In Plotinus' writings both fountain and tree serve as metaphors for the One.[13] Specifically, Plotinus represents the One as the tree's root "or" as a spring. Plotinus' pointed reference to the root of the tree and his use of the word "or" between the analogies argue strongly that his writings are the direct source of Marvell's phrasing, as well as his imagery. Milton Klonsky claims the connection.[14] Ruth Wallerstein, like Klonsky, assumes Marvell's specific knowledge of Plotinus.[15]

The soul, represented by a bird, flies into the tree limbs, where it does what birds normally do--perches, sings, and preens its feathers. These bird-activities, of course, represent the normal activities of the soul--self-expression and self-improvement, perhaps. But the ultimate act of the soul is to go up to heaven. This soul/bird, however, can go no higher than the tree-tops, where it must wait "till prepar'd for longer flight."

Following out the Plotinian image, we find that the One resides only in the tree root itself, while the branches represent the many expressions of the One. It is logical, therefore, that the soul would find its place among the branches as one of the One's expressions. It is also logical that "the various Light" shines "in" the soul/bird's plumes rather than through them, for, as Wallerstein points out, this is

the pure light of the One divided into a multitude of individual emanations,[16] of which the soul/bird is one. The light of being proceeds from the One and shines out from its expressions, including the bird. The light, therefore, is actually within the bird, perhaps even forming the bird's substance as an emanation of the One.

Why should a "longer flight" await the soul when it is already aglow with the One's light, perched in the company of spiritual beings? It seems more than likely that Marvell, being the thoughtful Christian that he was, used the Platonic One as a figure, if not a synonym, for the Christian God. That being so, it becomes clear that the soul cannot join God until the body dies. Until death, the most the soul can do is to pursue spiritual activities, so the speaker's soul does not join the source of the Light at the tree's root, but takes its place among the other emanations of the tree, the branches. And while this may be the most fulfilling existence the soul can achieve before death, it is not the complete fulfillment of the soul's destiny. For that, the soul must wait "for longer flight." Here in the garden, the soul has no function in a body incapable of action, is separated from the mind, yet cannot fly home to heaven, for the speaker is still alive.

And so ends the garden experience which the speaker expected to fulfill all the needs, desires, and talents of his being. What he found was frustration upon frustration. Instead of sensual delight and physical freedom, he found sensual surfeit and physical bondage. Instead of burgeoning intellectual creativity free of social pressures, he found uncontrolled mental activity disconnected from reality.

Instead of spiritual expression free of worldliness, he found spiritual limitation rooted in earthly life.

VIII

Such was that happy Garden-state,
While Man there walk'd without a Mate:
After a Place so pure, and sweet,
What other Help could yet be meet!
But 'twas beyond a Mortal's share
To wander solitary there:
Two paradises 'twere in one
To live in Paradise alone.

Body, mind, and soul united once more, and the power of speech regained, the speaker now vents his bitterness at his failure in the garden. The "Such" of the stanza's first line does not refer back to the garden just left, but forward to the description of "that happy Garden-state" of Eden which was such that no other experience will ever compare with it. The speaker still believes that a solitary life in the company of plants, the life Adam had in Eden before Eve appeared, is a life so enviable for its purity and sweetness that no other companion, or helpmate, could ever be as "meet," as suitable as that garden. And yet, he now realizes that such a life is impossible, for not even Adam was allowed to remain alone--"'twas beyond a Mortal's share" then and is, still, beyond the speaker. But the speaker in the stanza's last two lines makes clear that, despite his own divisive experience, he yet believes that solitude and living in the garden are each a Paradise, and to combine the two is to have two Paradises in one. He still longs for that double glory, but bitterly accepts now that it is unattainable.

IX

How well the skilful Gardner drew
Of flow'rs and herbes this Dial new;

Where from above the milder Sun
Does through a fragrant Zodiack run;
And, as it works, th'industrious Bee
Computes its time as well as we.
How could such sweet and wholsome Hours
Be reckon'd but with herbs and flow'rs!

With this final stanza the tone changes to one of contented wisdom. Here, at last, appears the proper sphere for man's life. It is neither the frenzied society of men nor the selfish world of retirement. It is a garden, but a carefully cultivated one. The plants of this garden are tame flowers and herbs which require tending, unlike the wild fruits and trees of the forbidden garden. Moreover, flowers and herbs serve man, the one through beauty, the one through taste and health-giving properties. Man's labors here, then, are rewarded with beauty and health, not with empty symbols.

This flower garden is the creation of a "skilful Gardner" who seems most likely to be God, who also created Adam's Eden. This new garden, however, is ruled by "the milder Sun," that is, by God's Son, who is milder than God because He brings man forgiveness and teaches him the way to salvation through humility, whereas it was God who punished man's sin of pride by harshly expelling him from the garden. And Christ the Son is present continually in the garden as He "Does through a fragrant Zodiack run," counting off the passing months as represented by the zodiacal calendar. Man is not solitary here. His companion is Christ. Under Christ's governance, man, like "th'industrious Bee," works God's garden, thus computing or taking into consideration his time. That is to say, man finds the fulfillment of his time laboring in God's

service, not in the pursuit of personal glory. This is "sweet and wholsome" labor--sweet as the Paradise of stanza eight, and whole instead of narrow like the labors of the men of stanza one. And for reward, the conscientious worker has not the merely symbolic branches cut from one tree, but has the living, sweet-smelling, health-giving flowers and herbs.

Marvell has led us, by way of his speaker, out of a world of mad ambition, into the equally mad opposite world of retirement, and finally to an ideal world of quiet but productive activity. And this is the meaning of the poem: that, while constant striving after public recognition is wrong, complete solitude without civilization is just as self-serving and wrong, but there is a right balance achieved by industriousness within a structure, governed by Christ, which brings its own reward of satisfaction.

And what of those who are not industrious, but passive, within a structure? They are mad, "amazed," trapped in "a green Thought in a green Shade," a maze of concepts spiraling ever further away from reality. In the Cromwell poems, the madmen are kings. Charles, in the "Horatian Ode," is described as Caesar, complete with laurels on his head (11. 23,24). The image is cut from the same cloth as that of "The Garden's" first stanza, in which vain and amazed men seek similar leafy garlands of prestige. Even as they are mad, so is Charles: "'Tis Madness to resist or blame" fate (11. 25,26), and, of course, this Caesar loses his head for it. But even at his execution, Charles is detached from reality, being instead "the Royal Actor" (1. 53). The

entire passage, filled with stage imagery, illustrates that Charles operates in a world of his own creation. This resembles stanza seven of "The Garden," in which the mind withdraws "into its happiness" and, disdaining reality, creates "Far other worlds," as Charles has done here. And while the world of the stage is complete in itself, "Annihilating all that's made," it is yet all illusion. Like the mind "Annihilating all that's made / To a green Thought in a green Shade," Charles has retreated into his own world and lost touch with the real world around him, proving what "The Garden" illustrates, that creativity is not the same as effectiveness, and in this case is even fatal.

Kings in general base their power on illusion, as described by Marvell in "The First Anniversary." Here, again, appears a maze. This time it is a whirlpool of time, and men caught in "the vain Curlings of the Watry maze" (1. 1) suffer the illusion of importance when time raises them to high positions, when in reality they are in the decline of their "increasing Years" (1. 4), aging and losing strength. Furthermore, kings pass on their illusions of power to their public, claiming as their own the capture of fortified cities by others, and calling useless wars victories as long as, though nothing was won, nothing was lost other than tax money (11. 23-26). Thus kings create their own versions of the world, apart from reality. All of this is, of course, in direct contrast to Cromwell, who not only wages and wins real wars, as seen in the "Horatian Ode," but who builds an entire governmental structure, as seen in "The First Anniversary." Cromwell

makes very real accomplishments in a very real world--no green thoughts in green shades for him!

Yet, Cromwell did prepare for his public role in a private way, which can be likened to the soul/bird of "The Garden" combing its wings "for longer flight." The "Garden" bird image is an image of preparation, of contemplation before taking action. So Cromwell, in the "Horatian Ode," begins as a youth who has been spending his time studying but must no longer "in the Shadows sing" (1. 3) now that the time for action has come. Again, in "The First Anniversary," he did not "from the first apply / [his] sober Spirit unto things too High, / But in [his] own Fields exercisedst long," until the time came for action (11. 229-234). The "Garden" bird does not reach the point of action in the poem, being separated from the body and mind, but Cromwell does not have that problem. He is the man "That does both act and know" ("Horatian Ode," 11. 75,76), and to continue the lines from "The First Anniversary" above, he has in his "own Fields exercisedst long, / An healthful Mind within a Body strong" (11. 231, 232). So Cromwell has the use of all his powers, but he prepares before using them, and the preparation is spiritual: study of the muses in the "Horatian Ode," exercise of a "sober Spirit" in "The First Anniversary," and early in "The First Anniversary," the study of the music of the spheres. This last especially resembles the "Garden" bird. The bird flies high into the tree's boughs; Cromwell "cuts his way still nearer to the Skyes" (1. 46). There, the bird "sits, and sings"; there, Cromwell learns a "Musique in the Region clear, / To tune this lower to that higher

Sphere" (11. 47,48). The music of the spheres, according to Joseph Anthony Mazzeo, represents Cromwell's grasp of cosmic order, expressed in his own being and imposed by him on the state.[17] Therefore, as the bird is "prepar'd for longer flight," Cromwell is prepared to build a new government, transposing cosmic music to the human scale, becoming Amphion, the singer who builds with music.

The similarities between the "Garden" bird and the Cromwell poem passages reveal a certain rightness of soul in Cromwell which, wisely readied in advance, enabled him to reach heights of achievement in his career. Marvell's recognition of the rightness of Cromwell's soul grows between poems, being briefly dealt with in the opening lines of the "Horatian Ode"; coming to full bloom in "The First Anniversary" in the long Amphion-building passage, especially in contrast to the long preceding passage about kings' inadequacy; and, finally, reaching fruition near the end of the "Death of O.C.," where the dead Cromwell has gone beyond the human sphere, and "Despoyl'd of mortall robes, in seas of blisse, / Plunging dost bathe and tread the bright abysse" (11. 287-90). Here, Cromwell's soul is freed of "mortall robes," just as the "Garden" bird is free of "the Bodies Vest." The soul bathing and treading "the bright abysse" sounds very like the bird waving "in its Plumes the various Light," both being images of all-suffusing light. The difference, of course, is that now Cromwell, through death, has reached the source of light in the world, "Spacious enough, and pure enough" for him, whereas the bird cannot go there while the body yet lives. The reward of reaching that world is implied in the "Garden"

passage, and reinforces the idea that spiritual preparation, the rightness of soul, has led Cromwell there.

Before death, Cromwell's spiritual preparation led him to play several roles: soldier, statesman, subject, father. In the poems, Marvell makes reference to these roles through symbols directly related to "The Garden": the sun and other natural forces, plants, and gardening. Sometimes, Cromwell is a natural force which subdues the world. Sometimes, he is the gardener who creates the garden. Sometimes, he is the sun, which rules the garden and measures time by the zodiac. Sometimes, he is part of the garden, subject to larger influences. The images evolve from poem to poem, as Marvell's view of Cromwell shifts from that of a "brave, bad man" to that of an able, benevolent ruler and tender-hearted family man. The overall picture is that of balanced government, a ruler ruled by fate or Heaven, by the state, and by love.

The early image, in the "Horatian Ode," is one of unstoppable natural violence. Here, Cromwell is "like the three-fork'd Lightning" (l. 13), first bursting to the fore of his party, then, still "burning through the Air" (l. 21), Charles' head "Did through his Laurels blast" (l. 24). Crowell comes across as powerful, and awesome in his power. Not one word in this passage suggests that this power is a good thing, only that it is unavoidable, "The force of angry Heavens flame" (l. 26). The passage is a description of Cromwell the soldier achieving his ends through force. Mazzeo claims that Cromwell's ambition for fame and glory drove him forth from retirement into war.[18] But in this poem of

qualified admiration we see the ruler ruled. The Cromwell who "Urged his active Star" (l. 12) is ruler of his destiny, but in having a star he is ruled by his destiny. He is, indeed, the agent of fate in being "The force of angry Heavens flame." Though he advances by his own "industrious Valour" (l. 33), his is the side of Fate, against which Justice complains in vain (l. 37). The natural force image disappears with Charles' beheading, and in the last third of the poem, Cromwell becomes more obviously the ruler ruled, the falcon which kills only at the falconer's command (ll. 91-96). This captive falcon is symbolic of Cromwell the soldier as servant of the state.

The elemental force of the "Ode" modulates to the more benign power of the sun in "The First anniversary." Marvell now presents a positive view of Cromwell, especially in contrast to kings, who, like the planet Saturn with its long year and malignant influence, have long reigns of only oppressive outcome. On the other hand,

> Cromwell alone with greater Vigour runs,
> (Sun-like) the Stages of succeeding Suns:
> And still the Day which he doth next restore,
> Is the just Wonder of the Day before.
> Cromwell alone doth with new Lustre spring,
> And shines the Jewel of the yearly Ring.
> 'Tis he the force of scattr'd Time contracts,
> And in one Year the work of Ages acts:
> (ll. 7-14)

Cromwell measures time by achievements and, in fact, manages to do in one year what it had previously taken literal ages to do: namely, establish rule, quell dissidents, and construct a complete government. In the zodiac by which achievements are measured, he is, indeed, the jewel. Cromwell's sun could well be the sun which, in "The Garden,"

runs "through a fragrant Zodiack," measuring "sweet and wholesome hours" of labor by the "herbs and flow'rs" of achievement. And Cromwell's days and year are part of natural time, whereas kings measure man-made time. While Cromwell is the sun running through its course, kings are only the mechanical figures which come out of clocks to strike the hour: "Thus (Image-like) an useless time they tell, / And with vain Scepter, strike the hourly Bell" (11. 41,42). Cromwell symbolized by the sun, therefore, is an undeniable natural force, just as he was when symbolizing by lightning; but whereas lightning is destructive, bursting and blasting, the sun is a marker of productivity. It is, however, not always peaceful, for "in his sev'ral Aspects, like a Star, / Here shines in Peace, and thither shoots a War" (11. 101-102), but its warlike aspects act to protect the state, not to threaten it. Opposing princes have the chance, if they have the wisdom, to steer "by his Beams" (1. 104) and to avoid violence if they "Kiss the approaching, not yet angry Son" (1. 106).

In "The Garden," we read that "the skilful Gardner drew / Of flow'rs and herbes this Dial new." Similarly, in "The First Anniversary," Cromwell "Levell'd every Cedar's top" (1. 262) and "Th'ambitious Shrubs he in just time didst aw" (1. 264), thus pruning and shaping the troublemakers in his garden. He also planted in his garden after the war:

> ...the large Vale lay subject to thy Will,
> Which thou but as an Husbandman wouldst Till:
> And only didst for others plant the Vine
> Of Liberty, not drunken with its Wine.
> (11. 285-88)

If in "The Garden" the gardener is God, then in "The First Anniversary" Cromwell as gardener is a creator in an earthly kingdom, his "Dial new" being a new government. The creation involves violence to king and countrymen, but once done, "the milder sun," Cromwell as ruler, takes over, marking the achievements of the new creation, as we have already seen.

But what happens when both the gardener, his work finished, and the sun, its time ended, disappear from the garden? The garden falls apart, as illustrated in both "The First Anniversary" and the "Death of O.C." In the earlier poem, a near-fatal accident sets off universal panic that the center of Nature itself was gone:

> Thou Cromwell falling, not a stupid Tree,
> Or Rock so savage, but it mourn'd for thee:
> And all about was heard a Panique groan,
> As if that natures self were overthrown.
> It seem'd the Earth did from the Center tear;
> It seem'd the Sun was faln out of the Sphere:
> (11. 201-206)

Cromwell the sun is the center of Nature, and when he falls from his place, the Earth falls out of orbit and all of Nature, down to the trees and rocks, is in chaos. Cromwell the man is the center of human order and, without him, justice, reason, courage, and religion fail (11. 207-208). When he recovers from the accident, his return is like the return of the sun in the morning, which to primitive man was miraculous. So foreign princes show their primitive expectations of this great man by their shock at his return to health (11. 325-58).

Again, upon Cromwell's actual death, Marvell reprises the description of natural chaos, building on both traditional, mythic storms

occasioning rulers' deaths and on the fact that a storm actually did occur on the day Cromwell died.[19] In the "Death of O.C.," thunder, wind, and rain create chaos, destroying the harvest and uprooting trees which had grown up with Cromwell's (11. 113-22). This figures the upheaval in government with its leader gone. The good which could be harvested from his deeds is destroyed, and the men who rose to power as Cromwell's aides lose their security. But for Cromwell himself, death is simple, as peaceful as a sunset (11. 135,136).

But Cromwell, too, is part of the failing garden. In "The First Anniversary," still strong, he is likened to the Biblical olive tree which refused to reign, even though in the next six lines he becomes the gardener levelling cedars. In "A Poem upon the Death of O.C.," the garden references multiply. First, Cromwell is the root whose flower is his beloved daughter, and when she becomes ill, he tries to hide his mourning from her: "So the Flowr with'ring which the Garden crown'd, / The sad Root pines in secret under ground" (11. 55,56). Expanding on that image, Cromwell becomes the grapevine pruned of its branch and weeping its sap until it dies (11. 89-101). Having died, Cromwell resembles "the sacred oak" reaching to Heaven with its branches and to earth with its roots, and whose boughs are full of victory wreaths. This echoes faintly of the first stanza of "The Garden," in which oak-leaf wreaths are one of the prizes sought by amazed men. But Cromwell is the oak itself, and the wreaths are not mere symbols of achievement, but, being part of the tree, they are the achievements themselves. So large is the tree that only when it falls can men

realize its greatness and only when Cromwell dies do men appreciate his greatness (11. 269-76).

And the source of his greatness lay in his encompassing the dual role of a ruler ruled. As we saw in the "Horatian Ode," he is ruled by destiny but also rules it by urging it on, and he seizes the power of rule only to give it back as a subject to the state. In "The First Anniversary," again he makes the opportunity to be king but refuses it, as Gideon in the Bible conquered Israel only to affirm God its King (11. 249-50). Foreign princes acknowledge Cromwell's strength to lie in his dual role:

> 'Abroad a King he seems, and something more,
> 'At Home a Subject on the equal Floor.
> 'O could I once him with our Title see,
> 'So should I hope yet he might Dye as wee.
> (11. 389-92)

And in the "Death of O.C." we read, "For he no duty by his height excus'd, / Nor though a Prince to be a Man refus'd (11. 83,83).

The balance of opposites proceeds and expands through the Cromwell poems. Initially, in the "Horatian Ode," the balance in Cromwell is between violence and humility, while the balance in the poem itself is between Cromwell the usurper and Charles the rightful king. In "The First Anniversary," Marvell opposes Cromwell, as a wise and effective statesman, to kings, as weak and useless figureheads. In this we can see the shift in Marvell's assessment as he recognizes Cromwell's spiritual preparedness for earthly rule. The poem is full of balanced opposites too many to enumerate, from opposing factions giving balanced support in the government structure to Cromwell's opposing desires for

both public and private life, to his power secured by the balance of peace and war. In the "Death of O.C." Marvell reveals additional balances, between strength of arm and tenderness of heart, joy in his daughter and grief over her, immortality of his acts and death of his body. The Cromwell of Marvell's poems plays all the parts, exhibiting that balance recommended in "The Garden." It is kings who are "amazed" and lose themselves in green thoughts in green shades. Cromwell, like a soul/bird, prepares, and then acts. From the violent lightning of the soldier to the creative gardener of the statesman, to the benevolent sun of the ruler, to the human garden of the subject, Cromwell possesses in himself all the elements necessary for the balanced life of selfless achievement pictured in the final stanza of "The Garden." Cromwell, as Marvell portrays him, is an example of "Garden" philosophy brought to life.

Notes

[1]Earl of Clarendon, as quoted in Cleanth Brooks, "Literary Criticism: Marvell's 'Horatian Ode,'" in Explication as Criticism: Selected Papers from the English Institute, 1941-1952, ed. W. M. Wimsatt, Jr. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1963), p. 127.

[2]The dates of composition for the Cromwell poems come from Elizabeth Story Donno, ed., Andrew Marvell: The Complete Poems (New York: Penguin Books, 1972), pp. 14, 15.

All references to the poetry will be to H. M. Margoliouth, ed., The Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), II.

[3]Donno, p. 14.

[4]Maren-Sofie Røstvig, "Andrew Marvell's 'The Garden': A Hermetic," English Studies, XL, No. 2 (1959), 70.

[5]Margoliouth, pp. 267-271.

[6]Frank Kermode, "The Argument of Marvell's 'Garden,'" Essays in Criticism, 2 (1952), 234-35.

[7]Ruth Wallerstein, Studies in Seventeenth-Century Poetic (n.p.: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1950), p. 306.

[8]Kermode, 229.

[9]Pliny, Natural History, trans. W.H.S. Jones (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1938), VI, 415-417.

[10]Allardyce Nicoll, ed., Chapman's Homer (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1956), II, 121-128; Ben Jonson, "To Penshurst" and "To Sir Robert Wroth," in Ben Jonson: The Complete Poems, ed. George Parfitt (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1982), pp. 95-101; Robert Herrick, "A Panegerick to Sir Lewis Pemberton" and "The Hock-Hart, or Harvest-Home," in The Poetical Works of Robert Herrick, ed. L.C. Martin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), pp. 101-102, 146-149; Thomas Carew, "To Saxham," in The Poems of Thomas Carew, ed. Rhodes Dunlap (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949), pp. 27-29.

[11]Stanley Stewart, The Enclosed Garden: The Traditional and Image in Seventeenth-Century Poetry (Madison: n.p., 1966), p. 160.

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[12]Sir Thomas Browne, Pseudoxia Epidemica, Vol. II of The Works of Sir Thomas Browne, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1928), pp. 242-44.

[13]Plotinus, Psychic and Physical Treatises; Comprising the Second and Third Enneads, trans. Stephen McKenna (London: Philip Lee Warner, 1921), II, 133.

[14]Milton Klonsky, "A Guide Through the Garden," Sewanee Review, 58 (1950), 25.

[15]Wallerstein, p. 184.

[16]Wallerstein, p. 331.

[17]Joseph Anthony Mazzeo, Renaissance and Seventeenth-Century Studies (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1964), p. 196.

[18]Mazzeo, p. 170.

[19]Donno, p. 277.

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